1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

Then, when we had all washed away
[764] the taint of death in the flowing river, we turned and once
[783] more climbed the path to the village.

5

The muffled sound of a gunshot came to us as we sat in the hut of the headman, speaking of the funeral. "Another child gone," he said, "Soon he will be safe in the earth."

We had not been permitted to go across the river to witness the burial. "It is a dangerous place for those who do not know it," the headman said. "*Ogi*—evil things—are [796] there, bad spirits who harm those who are not prepared, and we do not want evil to come to you. Several years ago there was a Bakra here when we buried another Gankwe man. He asked to go, and we granted him his wish. But the spirits of the bad bush across the river harmed him and he died, and now his ghost plagues us."

A second shot told us that the bearers had reached the grave after their march through the deep bush where living man seldom came. They had sung the *papa singi*—the dirges—which are intoned as the dead is borne to the grave. Once arrived there and the invocations pronounced, the salute fired, and the gods propitiated, two men would descend into the deep hole there to lift down the coffin and place it in the tunnel-like excavation dug under the undisturbed earth to the side of the large opening; would place it so that the falling earth might not disturb the spirit of the dead.

A third shot.

[413] The body was in the grave. The heaping of earth, with the burial hoe, with feet, and with fingers, back into the hole that had been so laboriously dug had commenced. The sun was getting low and darkness comes early in the big bush.

Now the last shot told us of the final ceremony. The food that had been brought for the last offering was being placed on the mound of heaped-up earth. The strip of white cloth to the spirit was being pushed into the ground on its stick. The burial party was backing away from the grave, slowly, slowly, so that the spirit would not be alarmed, so that it

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

765 head was clearest in the quiet of the early morning. A stillness so pronounced that we could feel it surrounded us at the base camp, for at Gankwe the drums had been replaced in the shrines of the gods for whom they speak, and no more guns saluted the spirit of Zimbi, or warned away the evil dead with the powder which was distasteful to ghosts. Zimbi was buried, the grave diggers had bathed
● [783] and put on fresh loin cloths, the village had been purified, and all was still.

512 From our shelter, watching the haze lift, we could see that the river had fallen; the tangled grasses at the bank showed fully a hand's breadth of fresh brown that had the day before been under water. With the coming of the sun things began to stir. The lizards appeared, the
[231] chickens came to peck at our shoes, looking for crumbs, and boats began to make shadows across the opposite bank, as the Gankwe women in their small corials went to their fields. At the bow would be a little girl, or a yet smaller
[868] boy—as young as four perhaps, for the older ones went with the men to learn a man's work—helping to take the boat up the fast water. All this went on quietly, until we espied three boats running down the rapids and pivoting about in the still water toward our landing place. As they
438 came nearer, we could see that the boats carried no load, and our host, the director of the balata-collecting station, explained that these boats were new and were being taken down river for sale.

"All the large boats come from top-side," he said. "The men take them clear around to the Marowyne River by way of the canals and there carry loads in them to the stations in the interior. The Saramacca men are fine canoemen. They like them on the Marowyne. . . . You could
439 use a large boat for your trip up river. Maybe the man will sell one."

[142] [304] The man in charge of the little flotilla stood more than six feet tall. His face was intricately cicatrized, and he carried himself with a dignity and reserve that surpassed even the way of the village chiefs.

REBEL DESTINY

had seen a hand reach out for the boat, had seen it vanish out of sight. The gods had accepted the offerings. That year the Granman from the city, the white Granman, had to send rice from a far country to feed them, but the next year the crops were good, and all had been well since that time.

"And was that when this shrine was removed to the other island?"

"*M'an sabi. A kan de*—I do not know. It is possible."

2

"When you get to the Mamadam," we had been told by a priestess in the city, "wash your face in the running water, and call on the Mother of the River three times."

Another had said, "If your foot should trip anywhere, be sure to call on your ancestors, but if you should happen to slip at the Mamadam, you must go at once to the river, strike the water three times, and ask the Mother of the River to release your soul. It is a bad thing to lose your soul there."

And our principal story-teller in the city, who was something of a wit, had said: "You both have light eyes. Your hair is not dark. You are not unlike the Bonkoru people who are light, and who, up the river, you will hear called the Toné folk." He was speaking of albinos. "It may be that you have a river god without knowing it. When you come to the Mamadam the spirit may come to you. You may find yourself speaking the tongue that only the Toné people know, and dancing the dances to the river gods, and swimming up the rapids. It will be a fine sight to see you dance to the drums. There was once such a woman. A woman white as you are, you hear? I myself saw her dance. When she danced, she wore red, and put a plug through her lip, and as she danced her color changed. She became black. When the spirit was satisfied, it let her go, and she paled and was a white woman again. I myself saw that woman dance. I saw her grow black while she danced, and saw

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

itself, an open shelter under a thatched roof resting on four posts. Inside it, upon the ground, lay a flat stone whitened with sacred clay, and on this a bottle stood. Directly behind the stone was the altar, a low table on which lay several egg-shaped pieces of the sacred pemba—the white clay—and some egg-shaped stones which had come from the bed of the river. A circle of iron, perhaps two fingers' breadth in thickness and having a diameter of ten or twelve inches, rested on the ground under the altar. A stick had been planted to face the thicket of wild pineapple that made a wall at the back, and from it hung a strip of white cotton for the ancestors. To the left of this was a simply carved stool, the tracery of its design become all but indistinguishable under the coat of white clay which covered it. Several bottles lay at the foot of this stool.

"Ya-hai, mati, you are praying to the Mother of the River. It is well," said Kasanya, as he came up to us with his pole-man and the men from Gankwe and interrupted our scrutiny of the shrine.

Followed by Sedefo and Asikanu, he entered the shrine, while the others stood with us outside the railing which connected at sides and back the posts upon which the roof rested. Kasanya called on the Sky God first. "*G'an gadu*," he began, "Mother of the River, Ancestors, grant that we travel safely. Grant that we bring the white man safely to the country of the Granman. Grant that the white man pay us well. I thank you."

As he finished, the listening men clapped their hands in unison, and spoke in chorus, "Great thanks!" Some distance away, down the slope which dropped to the river, was Bibifo, who wanted to be called Adrian. He did not come too near the shrine, but there he was, halfway up, with head bent, his lips moving as he muttered a prayer of his own.

Now Sedefo came forward, and Kasanya left the shrine and disappeared behind the pineapple bushes. When he came back he held leaves in his hand, which he said were sacred. He would crush them and put them in water dipped

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

783 here at the Mamadam, and later he would bathe with this
824 that he might be purified. Meanwhile Sedefo and Asikanu, each in his turn, addressed the Mother of the River, each speaking his errand and asking that his journey be prospered.

787 Bayo came up alone when the loading was quite finished. He sat down on a crosspiece of the shrine to one side of the flat rock, poured some of the contents of the bottle on the stone, and, taking up one of the egg-shaped pieces of pemba, he rubbed it between his fingers and touched the [302] moist stone with his whitened hands. Now with his fingers he streaked his upper arm, just below the shoulders and over the muscles which played to the swinging of the pole-stick, and then his chest and knees.

"Mother of the River, give us a safe journey. Carry the white man and his woman without sickness. I thank you."

Later, when we were about to make off, he turned to us with his ready laugh. "You will walk well, Ba'ka. I have a strong spirit. I said things to the Mother of the River under my breath which you did not hear. The Mother of the River will look after you."

"What is this log, Bayo, right here on top of the falls? Why has no one claimed it?" we asked, pointing to the log of purple-heart close by, which we had noticed lying across the Mamadam.

"When it was sent down, something happened to turn it sidewise, and it was caught so. No one will touch it. It must be that the gods wanted it for themselves."

4

778 There are many shrines on the river. At the G'an Creek a
784 man would speak his prayer from a distance, call the creek "ancestor," state his errand, and continue his journey. Far up the stream, where the juncture of the Pikien Rio and the Grand Rio forms the river which the Bush Negroes call the Saramacca, is the Tapa Wata shrine. There, our men said, we would do well to avoid looking, though our boat rested across the river more than a quarter of a mile

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

"The gods are friendly to you, Massa. The men have all noticed it. You look upon trees and falls with pleasure. When you see them, it is as if you met with a friend. That is good. But the gods have their powers, and men have theirs. The Rabbit says, 'Evil is everywhere.' Last night, you remember, there was a man who did not look up when you passed his house, and when you spoke 'Howdo' to him, he would not answer. He was an obia man. He would not take the hand of a white man. I have heard the men say there are others who are not glad that the white man has come so far, and that the gods have allowed it. . . ."

Abruptly he stopped. He had said more than he intended.

"I came to tell you about another thing," he continued after a moment of embarrassment. "You should know about fio-fio."

Fio-fio was a small brown bug, and it was also a spirit. The spirit fio-fio brought sickness and death to human beings. For people like ourselves, untutored in the ways of the spirits, and the things which allowed them to gain sway over an individual, only a diviner could seek out the incident which had caused fio-fio to come.

That was why it was necessary to bathe in a protecting fluid, to "wash fio-fio," even though we had not yet been stricken.

"Let me tell you how to wash fio-fio," he went on. "You must bathe when nobody sees you, and this is what you must have: the skin of a plantain we call the mother plantain that has been dried in smoke, and weeds which I will give you, and Negro-country pepper which I have with me, and seven pieces of chalk, and some eggshells. Some people put washing-blue in the water, too, but that you don't need. You can bathe in it early in the morning, or at noon, or right after sundown, but no one must see you."

He paused for a moment.

"Do you not have fio-fio in your country? Look, this is how it is. You quarrel with a man who works for you, and he comes back and says he is sorry, and you say you are

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

sorry, too. He does that because he is afraid of fio-fio. If a man quarrels with you, and he keeps his anger in him, and you keep yours, and later he takes work from you, then either he, or you, or both of you will get sick. If the anger was great, then you or he or both of you will become very sick. If you catch it soon, then you get together, and, as we say, '*Pu' mofo'*—take back what you had said. Then you get better."

Fio-fio had nothing to do with enmity. Honest enmity was not harmful. Enmity masked, however, or bitterness, or a grudge which a man harbored while he continued a relationship of friendship, sickened a man, and it sickened the man against whom the grudge was held, as well. That was fio-fio. Only those who had relationships of intimacy were subject to it—people who were united by blood ties, or ties of friendship, or servants who formed part of the household.

The remedy was ceremonially to retract and ask for pardon. It had to be done before people, with the proper ritual and bathing.

"If this isn't done, then a person gets worse and worse, and dies. I myself saw the fio-fio bug fly out of the nose of a dying woman."

This woman had sickened because she had quarreled with her sister over a man. In the end they had both lost him. As time went on, they began to talk again and later lived together in their mother's house. But they had never forgiven each other. One day one of them borrowed a kerchief from the other to wear at a dance. The next day she was ill. From then on she got worse and worse.

"The quarrel between the sisters had happened so long ago that they never thought of it. So they did nothing. In a month she died, and I myself saw the fio-fio bug fly out of her nose."

He knew another story about fio-fio.

"This happened to a man I know. His child died less than a month ago. He was living with a woman, and the woman became big with child. He had been away in the

Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

gods do not come to them." There was in her voice contempt for women who had no gods. She was of a reddish-brown color, taller and more slender than most, and the great coils of brass about her arms and ankles told that her beauty had had full recognition. These had come to her at marriage, as had the small earrings of gold which the bassia had brought to her from French Guiana. With these, too, had come cloths and handkerchiefs, beads and carvings.

If white women had no gods, did they know any of the other things which women must know? Did the white woman wear an apron underneath all her cloths, as women should? Were her thighs cicatrized? Did she cook for her husband, or other men, when she should be isolated in the special house provided for women's monthly visits? Did she purify herself with sacred clay when she emerged from isolation in order not to spoil her husband's obias, for which contact with a woman who has her menses is the deadliest taboo? Why, having borne children, did her figure not show it?

"Have you drums?" the bassia's wife asked. "Without drums, how do you pray? How do you dance?"

Dancing without drums availed nothing.

"White women have no gods. The gods do not come to them. They are not troubled by the need to dance. White women do not pray," she concluded, seeing that what dancing the white woman did could only be a feeble affair.

"I will send my son to your country. The men who go to the French shore say it is good to know how to count the white man's way. My woman-child I will never send," she finished with finality.

Now it was the white woman's turn to ask a few questions, having done explaining how her boots laced, and why it was that she was dressed very much as her husband was dressed.

The white clay in the hair and on the face of a small child was medicine. The child's mother had washed for her god that morning. He was a god whose day for dancing was Wednesday, and now, feeling the god stir in her, she would

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

wash every day until Wednesday came to permit her to dance. When she washed with the sacred moistened clay, she rubbed the white on her children.

"Will all the women dance on Wednesday who have the same god as you?"

The child's mother shook her head. "If the god comes to them, yes. If he doesn't come, they can't dance."

And the bassia's wife said, "The women who are in the menstrual house can't dance. When they hear the drum they are troubled, but they must remain quiet."

The woman had spoken too eagerly and too loudly, for her husband, overhearing her, said something in a low rapid voice, and at once the women fell silent and several of them remembered errands they had to see to.

4

"When men are in the council house, you mustn't interrupt," said the bassia's wife to the white woman. "If we did what you did just now, our husbands would scold us when they got home, and if we did it again, they would beat us."

She had taken upon herself all the prerogatives of friendship, and continually criticized the manners of her visitor.

The old were to be greeted last. A gift was to be received by another. When returning a piece of carving to another's hand, the carving should rest on the outstretched palm, while the elbow of that arm lay on the palm of the other hand. In the presence of men, a woman who took a stool should turn it about and sit on its narrower side.

"Never sit on the bare earth. The spirits don't like it," she said one instant, and the next, "Don't play with your fingers on top of your sun helmet. Your breasts will get long. Drumming is not a thing for women."

There had been other warnings during earlier visits to Bush Negro villages, but none had borne down so heavily upon the shortcomings of the stranger.

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

holding a stick the size of a well-grown boy's arm. Round and round they went, as the widow from her doorway moaned her lament, and guns sounded in honor of the dead. The more important the man, the more guns were fired. Their own men had been the Granman's brothers. There was shooting till . . . till late afternoon, when they could not delay the bathing at the river any longer.

Before dark, all had to go to the river to bathe, and the widow, too, was led there with the others. There she purified herself, and discarded her mourning clothes, drawing on new cloths, and making herself fit with ornaments for the ceremony of rejoicing. This was followed by dancing which lasted late into the night. All the gods might be danced to at an adyo ceremony—Adonko; Vodu, the snake; Opete, the buzzard; Tigri, the jaguar; and all the gods of the bush and the ant hill—and, at the beginning, the seketi social dances and the half-sacred awasa. These dances were held for the spirits of men and women alike, and it did not matter whether the dead, or the living members of the family of the dead, shared these gods with the rest of the villagers, or not.

"But mourning is not over yet," said Fenekonde.

Seven months more elapsed, she showed on her fingers, before a woman might cohabit with her brother-in-law. If there was no brother-in-law to take her, then a woman had to wait twelve months after the adyo ceremony, instead of seven.

"If a woman doesn't care for her brother-in-law," continued Fenekonde, "or he doesn't care for her, then, when the seven months have passed, he comes to her hammock for two nights. Then she can go to another man at once."

When the husband who had died left no brothers, and there was no one else in his family to take the widow, the family of the dead man sought out a husband for her.

"They look and they look, until they are weary," said the Granman's younger wife, "but a man must be found before a woman can come out of mourning."

REBEL DESTINY

A man who wished to buy a god for his son went to a renowned obia man and agreed to pay him a certain sum of money if, at the end of the period of training, the god came to the boy.

"When the obia man says the boy is ready, they give a dance. At this dance, the drum is played for the god, and the boy must dance. If the god comes to him, then the obia man gets his money, but if the god does not come, then he does not get what was promised him, because they had made an agreement for a god, and no god came."

The training was not very difficult—it was not like the training for becoming an obia man. A boy was given obia water to wash in. Every eight days the water in the obia pot was changed, and this bathing continued for three moons. When the ritual of purification was over, he was taught the drum rhythms of the god, the invocations which the drum sounded, and the spoken invocations. Songs, and make-up for the dancing, and the dancing itself he was taught, and when he might call upon the god, and what he must do when the god comes, and what offerings the god was to receive. If the god spoke "tongues," he was also instructed in the appropriate language. There were the words of the mocking little Apuku gods and the sounds which only Toné people made, and there was the "Kromanti tongo."

"Can all the gods be bought?" we asked.

"Kweti, kweti!" he shook his head in emphatic denial. "The river gods cannot be bought. You are born a Toné man or woman, or the Toné god comes to you from your family. But all the Vodu gods you can buy; and the god Bongo, the alligator; and the ant hill gods and the gods of the kankan tree, and the Apuku bush gods." He paused for an instant, as if he were considering something. "And men buy Kromanti for their sons, if they have none to give them. Almost every man in the bush has Kromanti. If he hasn't it, then he tries to buy it for his sons. A man needs Kromanti. When he has the Kromanti spirit, fire cannot hurt him, nor glass, nor anything that cuts—

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramaccaner

man of each tribe has a uniform given him by the Dutch; it 648
consists of a high silk hat, a braided frock coat, a drum-major's baton, and a metal plaque suspended around the neck, with the arms of Surinam on it. The ensemble is picturesque in the extreme. Captains have uniforms, too, but less ornate ones. The great full-dress occasion is the palaver at Paramaribo, held on or about the Queen's birthday, toward the end of August. This is an occasion of festivity throughout the colony.

The Governor receives the Bush Negro chiefs as he would any foreign ambassadors, and the dignity of these men, the aristocracy of their bearing, cannot be exceeded by white plenipotentiaries. There is one difference: most of the Djuka females remain at home. Indeed, Jankoeso has forbidden his daughters to go to Paramaribo on any occasion whatsoever. He himself must make a pilgrimage to the sacred medicine city of Dahomey in preparation for the trip, at which time he undergoes a purifying ritual at the hands of the high [783 ●
obeiah priests, to muster good obeiahs for a salubrious passage. 793]

The only attempt of the Dutch to exercise any authority over the Bush Negroes is in regard to the burial ceremony. This has been a bone of contention for many years. The 648
Djuka custom is to allow the corpse to remain unburied for 764
a long period. The Dutch tried to stop this, not from any desire to interfere with the customs of the natives, but for sanitary reasons. The disagreement was finally compromised by a time limit of three days between death and burial. This regulation is usually not observed. Once they get back into their remote villages, the Bush Negroes do as they please.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

the white man has never been allowed to enter. A spirit named *Hini* hovers over the town, and it is he, not the Djukas, who would be offended by the presence of a bahkra. People seriously ill are brought to Dahomey from the surrounding villages. The witch doctors there, old women as well as old men, and occasionally a virgin, administer their potent charms. Only young married women are debarred from the profession of medicine among the Djukas.

Here also comes the Granman of the Saramaccaner tribe, to undergo the sacred ritual before making his annual visit to Paramaribo. He receives absolution from the Dahomey medicine men in preparation for his sojourn among the bahkras. The ceremony is known as *makee suka,* or putting himself in favour with the gods.

Our friend Abaisa, headman of Lombe, tells us something of the Dahomey rituals. To mend a broken bone the patient is shut up in a small hut with the doctor and three white cocks. The first fowl is killed by having its neck wrung, the blood from its beak running on the floor of the hut as a sacrifice to Amu, the ground god. The second fowl is cut open for inspection. If the bladder is light in colour the prognosis is good, but if dark the reverse is the case. The third cock has its leg bone broken at a point approximately corresponding to the patient's fracture. After this both the fowl and the human patient undergo daily treatment at the hands of the doctor, to the accompaniment of prayers to Amu and the shaking of rattles to scare off the evil spirits. The nature of the treatment could not be ascertained, but on the day when

/12 cont./

796 Then they call all the neighbors together to take part in the
273 festivities to be held, which consist of invoking their gods amidst continuous dancing and excessive drinking.

They begin the festivities only on a Friday and usually finish on a Sunday or Monday, depending on the larger or smaller
[147] supply of drink, so, lacking this, the festival ends. After the conclusion they are usually extremely tired and listless and give themselves up entirely to rest for at least two or three days.

It is a definite requirement at these festivities to be very amply supplied with strong drink, because one must drink without
[782] interruption in order to remain in a continuous narcosis. With each drink they first pour a little on the ground, -- so that it, too, on which they find themselves so gay, may participate in their enjoyment.

[262] The merrymakers then take care that they will by no means
[577] be lacking in fish, wild game, bacon, rice, etc., since it is a matter of honor with them to display the most lavish hospitality on such occasions.

776 The gods that they worship are:

Loango Gado,
Papa Gado,
Cromantie Gado,

/13/ names certainly derived from the various African tribes of these names.

In the first two they glorify nature and everything created, from which it therefore appears that these are merely subordinate
[787] gods of the unnamed, single great spirit. The last is above all regarded by them as the mediator who transmits their wishes to the great spirit; he is invoked especially at burial ceremonies and for consultation in connection with serious illnesses.

796 They do not have any other cult or religion, so far as I was
[771] able to discover, but only the fixed habit of still celebrating to-
[132] gether and with their chief and captains on the first Friday of the new moon in the month of October or November, after the long
● [783] dry period has set in for good, a great feast that has as its goal a general atonement, to cleanse them of the misdeeds that they have committed.

764 767 [439] /165 cont./ There may be 126 camisas (1) and

1. Pieces of cotton goods about 1.10 x 0.75 meters. These cloths are manufactured in Holland especially for the Refugee Black clientele.

15 large pieces of cloth. About 30 camisas have been taken from the dead woman's trunk; the others have been given by the people present, the near relatives each giving several, the other relatives only one.

Their work finished, the kisimã burn the shavings and [783] scraps of board. They pass their tools through a flame to purify them of the stains of death. /166/

About 3:00 P.M. the coffin is brought into the mortuary shed by the kisimã. The kisimã, who have complete charge of this phase of the obsequies, count the pieces of cloth and divide them up. One part will be used for their pay, others for the pay of the gravediggers. Fifteen pieces of cloth and about [765] ten ordinary camisas will be placed in the coffin. The rest will be used for clothing the widower who, during the whole period of mourning, will thus remain symbolically dependent upon the dead person; if there are any left over, they are distributed to the members of the dead person's lineage.

Placing in the Coffin. About three o'clock four of the [292] kisimã take their places beside the coffin; they gird their loins with a camisa as the Refugee Blacks always do before carrying out a religious act. In the greatest silence they spread out the 15 large pieces of cloth inside the coffin, allowing them to fall to the ground at right and left. Next, two of them lift up the body while the others slip the coffin underneath (for the whole duration of the burial ceremonies, the body must remain at the exact place where it was put down. The coffin does not rest directly on the ground but is put on a mat through the

/170 cont./

428 613 It is very clear in Kotoïda's case that the inheriting is within the matrilineage in the strict sense, bɛɛ. Only the members of the Afi lineage to which she belonged can profit by it.

764 Burial. About 2:00 P.M. the women of the lineage who had been preparing the food for the ɔlɔmɛ since morning leave by canoe in the direction of the cemetery.

At three o'clock the last preparations begin. The occupants of the mortuary shed, completely veiled and supported by their near relatives, go to take up positions at the wharf for the last farewells (for they will not go to the cemetery).

The coffin is carried through the village one last time. This is the farewell of the dead woman to her family. The objects used in mourning are carefully collected, the earth of the shed floor raked up wherever the sanies of the cadaver might have fallen, and the whole put on the papay which is placed on the mortuary bark.

[765] At three o'clock an apinti drum is placed on the wharf to call the dead person (it is obviously a question of preventing the yɔrka from remaining in the village). The dead person turns up at the wharf. The coffin passes over a freshly cut banana-tree trunk placed at the limit of the village and of the beach. This is the symbolic passing of the dead person out of the world of the living. It is put on the canoe while the lamentations of the near relatives resound. The scene is not lacking in grandeur.

• [773] The canoe draws slowly away, the drummer in the bow, while the spectators go down in a long procession to wash themselves free of the defilement of death.

[767] At four o'clock they arrive at the cemetery. The bearers of the dead person who have taken places in the canoe pass their burden to the ɔlɔmɛ who have come to the edge of the river. This to mark the fact that /.71/ the ɔlɔmɛ are in authority at the cemetery. The bearers will only be present at the ceremony.

Gilliéron--275 K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

/180 cont./

765 are divided up equally among all the inhabitants of the village. But if the dead person had near relatives in the village, children, nephews, or brothers, it is they who stand the main burden.

[613] Members of the dead person's lineage who are settled in other villages contribute equally to the expenses and the organizing of the festival, but in a symbolic fashion. /181/

[823] A council (kuutu) of the village inhabitants sets the date; during the two weeks preceding each one is busy. The women 765 hull and winnow rice, prepare great quantities of couac and 262 sugar-cane juice. The busimã scour the bush and have meat and fish smoked. Each one, according to his means, buys tafia, sugar, chocolate, and other articles of food liked by the Refugee Blacks.

765 The celebration of the rites occupies a whole week. This 995 is because, the Refugee Blacks think the influence of the dead person can be eliminated only progressively by the repetition of the rite of separation.

The first day, the yaka of the dead person whose mourning is going to be lifted is called by formulas beaten on the [535] apinti drum. Then possession dances take place.

765 The second day is reserved for the material preparation for the ceremonies to follow.

[613] The third day, the spouse in mourning, if there is one, is conducted by the members of the dead person's lineage under [822] the mortuary shed. He is dressed in red and is congratulated for having kept the mourning well. Then he is led to the river, [983] and old women of the dead person's lineage begin to bathe him [995] while adjuring the yaka to part company with him.

The fourth day at nightfall, all those present assemble [538] at the mortuary shed. They recite tales (Anãsi tɔli), [781] improvisations (mato), and riddles (ɔdo). This phase of the festival has as its object the concentrating of the attention of the hearers; it creates a warm, collective atmosphere which impregnates those present, bringing to them intense and highly colored emotions.

/196 cont./

784 Odun's punishment is not regarded as immediate. It may be delayed for a certain number of years for reasons known to him alone, but it will necessarily take place.

683 Violence can be pardoned if the guilty one repents and
• 783 makes an offering. The reparative offering (for example, if someone has threatened his adversary with a machete or has struck him to the point of making blood flow) is a demijohn of tafia or a certain quantity of tobacco leaves displayed in Odun's chapel.

754 But there is no pardon for the wisimã. Even if men pardon,
784 Odun remains pitiless. Thus nobody can admit being guilty of wisi, for there is no possible reparation; besides, no one would dare beg for Odun's mercy on behalf of a wisimã, for this would be to associate oneself with him and expose oneself to being struck by the god in the same way.

[683] The wisimã will be killed by Odun, and men will have
[764] to share in the punishing by refusing the body burial in the cemetery and by going to throw it in the bush. If they /197/ refused to obey this law, Odun would consider that they denied his doctrine and would strike them down either in person or by killing any member of the guilty lineage.

Thus, when in 1952 an old woman named A... of the Lapé lineage, who had settled in the Creole village Hermina, died, it appeared that she had wisi; but since she had been living among the Creoles, her near relatives did not dare intervene, and she was buried in the Hermina cemetery. Several
[613] years passed without incident, then misfortunes cropped up; deaths which took place in the lineage, especially that of P... (1955) and T... (1957), and an accident that happened to a child in 1958, were recognized as punishments carried out by Odun upon the Lapé lineage.

346 The place of worship of Odun is a tiny chapel near the grand man's house. It contains only a post crudely carved in the shape of a bust, without any decoration.

/197 cont./

The rites of the worship of Odun are known only by the grand man and by an old man who replaces him when he travels. They are practiced only on the occasion of the collective oath against wisi, renewed every two or three years, and when it is necessary to implore Odun's mercy toward an offender. The officiant bathes the latter's body with a maceration of leaves that he alone knows.

To question Odun and know whether he pardons, they make use of a sacred object named afalaku, placed on a board put on the heads of two men. The answers yes and no are deduced by interpretation of the movements of the bearers, as in the interrogation of the dead.

The oath before Odun is also practiced as a legal test, permitting a man unjustly accused of theft or any misdeed whatever to justify himself.

Thus, in November, 1959, B... of Asisi, accused by two Djuka of being responsible for the burning of a large cabin /carbet/ in which objects of value were stored, asked to justify himself before Odun.

Odun's laws, which have the effect of forbidding violence, vengeance, and every form of oppression, give to the society of the Refugee Blacks a unique atmosphere of dignity and serenity which is not found to the same degree in animistic African societies. Most African societies censure sorcery and murder, but they accept vengeance and various forms of oppression. It is probable that the men who, two or three centuries ago, deep in the forests of Surinam, developed these laws, were inspired more or less consciously by Christian ideas; but they introduced them into an African system of thought, associating them with the idea of material sanctions in the present life, without which they would have been powerless.

*539 so that the people will see you." She answered: "It is I who will drag you as far as the bush." They discussed it to the insult stage, and wagered. They agreed to set Sunday as the test time; she should pull the end of a rope going out from the village. She said: "Very well." -- "I am proud of my ancestors, Bush-Mama. You will not drag me into the bush. I am the one who will drag you inside the village."

Then he came back to the village and went to the river. He rushed into the water, dyou! he went up to the Water-Mama. He said to her: "Will you have a tug-of-war against me? The Water-Mama answered: "It is I who will drag you into the river." Anansi said: "I am sure to drag you up on land so that the people will see how you look." Again they wagered and set Sunday as the test day. He said: "Very well, on the day set I shall come into the water to hold out the end of a rope to you." The Water-Mama said: "Very well. I shall stay there to take the end of the rope." We shall see who is a man and who is not."

He went back to his village. Saturday afternoon he set up a tyifunga (2) enclosure around the village, as far as the river

[751] [824] [417] [783]

2. Magic enclosure made of pinot palm leaves strung on a cord, to which is attributed the power to stop bad influences. After putting up the enclosure they purify the village by cleaning it completely.

and as far as the bush behind the village. He cleaned the village completely. He cut a long and strong rope, he went to slip one end of it into the river, he went to put the other in the bush.

On Sunday the Bush-Mama and the Water-Mama came and each pulled on an end of the rope. Anansi himself was not